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McMorris Rodgers Works to Improve Heart Health

(Washington, D.C.) This week, Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers unveiled legislation to create a demonstration project that would voluntarily monitor children's heart health. The Kids with Healthy Hearts Act (H.R. 7052) provides grants to school districts to take the blood pressure readings of children in kindergarten through sixth grade. This demonstration project would then help identify children with hypertension or early signs of hypertension.

This program is voluntary—parents must allow their children to participate. The Kids with Healthy Hearts Act also doesn't create a massive new government program. Instead, it's a small demonstration project to simply gain more information about the occurrence and seriousness of hypertension in children. That information can lead to necessary education, proper nutrition and adequate physical activity for children and parents.

"As much as 30 percent of obese children in this country may have high blood pressure. That startling statistic means we need to take care of children now to help prevent heart disease later in life," McMorris Rodgers said after submitting the bill yesterday. "Finding out our own health information is the first step toward making healthy decisions. We must begin to refocus our health sector on encouraging wellness and prevention, not just paying for expensive, acute care after people get sick."

McMorris Rodgers believes healthy living and prevention of health problems are key components of helping control the escalating medical costs in our country. She believes that by improving accountability for our own health decisions, as well as improving access, affordability, quality and choice in our health care system we can lower health care costs, and offer an alternative to a government-run, one-size-fits-all health care system for America.

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